



GUIDANCE FOR AFFILIATED CLUBS

Step 3: updated 27th November 2020

This guidance might be updated in due course

Introduction

This guidance document has been developed in adherence with government guidelines as outlined by the government on 22nd September 2020 and can be put in place immediately unless otherwise stated. All England Athletics guidance documents will be updated as per government guidelines when they are made available or as soon as possible thereafter.

These guidelines apply to **England only**. [More details available here](#). **We recommend that you stay up-to-date with government guidance. Government guidance supersedes all advice given by the governing body and must be followed at all times.**

Please stay aware of any local lockdown measures and restrictions enforced in your local area. These may be put in place by government at short notice and restrictions may vary across different areas. [Click here to view a list of local lockdown areas and the restrictions applicable to those areas](#). If local lockdown measures come into force that may impact on planned club activity (i.e. a competition) then please contact your local authority for local-specific advice.

The safety and wellbeing of all athletes, runners, coaches, and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that England Athletics is distributing. The guidance that follows provides sport specific advice to help affiliated clubs. **It is important to say that any return to activity must take account of local conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all government guidance around COVID-19 is considered.** It is the responsibility of each athlete, runner, coach, club, and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must consider mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken.

Your health

It is of paramount importance that those operating within clubs, including club personnel, coaches, and athletes, monitor themselves for any signs of the virus, as well as general health. We will be updating specific 'back to training guidance' shortly but all athletes should follow the advice of their GP or medical practitioner in all cases.

This guidance has been published on the understanding that it is an interpretation of government guidance relevant to the sport of athletics and running. It is likely to change at short notice, in which case we will publish updates through the [England Athletics website](#) and social media channels. All parties should note the [disclaimer](#) at the end of this piece. Please also read our other guidance documents:

1. [Guidance for Coaches – return to activity](#)
2. [Guidance for Athletics Venues – return to activity](#)
3. [Guidance for Athletes and Runners – return to activity](#)
4. [Guidance for Road Running Coaches – return to activity](#)

Section 1: Considerations for planning club activity

COVID-19 Coordinator

Clubs should appoint a designated COVID-19 Coordinator (preferably with experience in health and safety in a professional or volunteer setting) whose responsibilities are to work with the club committee to coordinate:

- Liaising with the facility manager/landowner in relation to all matters concerning COVID-19.
- Producing site-based risk assessments ensuring that the club is compliant with government guidelines. These will need to be updated when guidance or club activity changes or evolves.
- Ensuring all necessary levels of risk mitigation are in place prior to training.
- Clubs should ensure they are prepared and have planned for circumstances where injuries or other accidents occur, and they have mitigating procedures and plans in place to resolve the issue while maintaining all government guidance ensuring compliance of social distancing measures during training sessions.
- Ensuring that volunteers, coaches/leaders, athletes, and parents/guardians are adhering to this guidance.
- Ensuring that the club complies with the facility restrictions and guidance.
- Ensuring the club has a process in place for capturing details of all members / participants who take part in EVERY club session to ensure they are able to support the UK government track and trace programme.

The COVID-19 Coordinator role is not expected to take full responsibility for all health and safety, or risk assessment protocols implemented by the club. It is the responsibility of the club committee and key officers/volunteers to ensure protocols are implemented and reviewed across the club with the COVID-19 Coordinator acting as the key point of contact for related matters.

In carrying out those tasks listed above and checking the guidance provided by Sport England and the government, you should be able to enable a [COVID secure environment](#).

Communication with facility operators

To understand when and how facilities are going to reopen, we recommend that clubs arrange a conversation with the facility manager/landowner to discuss the following points:

- An appropriate method for members to arrive and leave the site to maintain social distancing.
- Roles and responsibilities of the facility and club officers on site.
- Booking processes
- Access to equipment
- Cleaning requirements
- First aid
- Changes in venue capacities

For more information see [Guidance for Athletics Venues – return to activity](#) as well as any local restrictions that have been put in place in relation to capacity.

Group Management & Training Sessions

Overall capacity

England Athletics **will not** be imposing a limit to the number of participants that can be at a facility / venue at any given time as part of a club training session due to the diverse nature of training facilities. This is only applicable if the venue is a [COVID Secure environment](#). For more information see [Guidance for Athletics Venues – return to activity](#) and always ensure you take into consideration any local restrictions that have been put in place by the facility / venue operator and/or landowner.

Training sessions should be delivered in line with any general capacity restrictions imposed locally.

- Training sessions need to be compliant with social distancing guidelines.
- Ensure you have considered site access when determining overall training session capacity.
- Ensure you have considered access to toilets / first aid etc and can manage this in accordance with relevant restrictions / guidance that is in place.

Group sizes and management

- There is no limit on group sizes for outdoor activity in a Covid-secure environment.
- Indoor activity for Under 18's can take place with larger numbers, however Department for Education guidance and coaching ratios should be adhered to i.e. there must not be more than 15 athletes or runners as part of the group which therefore requires 2 coaches / leaders to be in attendance (i.e. for a total group of 15 U18s, the coach / leader ratio is 2:15).
- Indoor group training for over 18's please refer to Tier Table for guidance
- Be aware of the travel restrictions in place across the different tiers for club training and competition- please refer to Tier Table for guidance
- Ensure your training sessions are compliant with coach / leader ratios as per the terms of the coach / leader licence i.e. each coach / leader should not be responsible for more than 12 athletes / runners at one time.
- Coaches and leaders should not be working with multiple groups across different areas of a facility.
- Groups should be led by an appropriately licensed coach / leader.
- Club officers should ensure that all coaches' licenses and DBS are up-to-date and have a process for signing off DBS that is COVID-19 compliant.
- Clubs should ensure that an appropriate time buffer is built in between training sessions. The appropriate time should be determined by the club, based on enabling social distancing as well as allowing for adequate cleaning to take place.
- Where a parent / carer may need to stay at a training session for safeguarding reasons, clubs should ensure that there is adequate spectating space, clearly marked. We recommend that club welfare officers should be contactable during training sessions.
- Clubs should provide all coaches and athletes with appropriate guidance in relation to training sessions.

Specific considerations and restrictions when working with junior athletes (U18s)

- Groups involving young people (under 18's) should be coached / led in no more than a group of 15 (for this you would need 2 coaches/leaders to meet the 1:12 coach / leader ratio). More information on coaching young athletes and runners, and government guidelines for when working with young people, can be found [here at Sport England](#) or via [Department for Education](#)

For guidance for younger, disabled and vulnerable athletes please see [Guidance for Athletes & Runners – return to activity](#)

Travel Restrictions - This differs between Tiers. Please see Tier Table for more guidance

Section 2: Communication with members

It is recommended that clubs should provide guidance to members, coaches, and volunteers prior to arrival for any club activity to implement appropriate measures based upon the COVID-19 risk assessment. Guidance will be dependent upon each individual club situation and local facility set-up; however, such guidance may include:

- Processes and procedures being implemented to manage the number of training groups and numbers of athletes to adhere to guidelines.
- Details of bookings processes (where implemented).
- Welfare officer and COVID-19 coordinator contact details.
- The revised process for registration / sign-in on arrival to club training.
- Guidance for athletes on arrival and on completion of training to avoid larger groups congregating.
- Details of specific procedures relating to use of equipment & facilities and appropriate hygiene guidance based upon the COVID-19 risk assessment.
- Providing guidance for parents / carers of junior athletes regarding spectating and arrangements to drop-off / pick-up.
- Advising members to arrive ready for training and inform members whether toilet facilities will be available.

Prior to commencing training, it is advised that clubs consider:

- Clear signage in place at club training sessions to help enforce social distancing, cleaning, and hygiene measures.

- Suitable booking systems or management of training groups to ensure training can take place within the guidelines.
- Processes and procedures to manage the number of training groups and number of athletes to adhere to guidelines. This could for example include zoning certain track areas to ensure distinct groups can operate safely within the guidelines.
- Processes are in place to avoid larger groups arriving in the same area at any given time, e.g. at car parks and entrances.

Communication with club officers

To adhere to government guidance regarding the current phase of COVID-19 stages, we recommend club officers adhere to the following points in relation to club governance:

- Clubs should continue to conduct committee meetings virtually. [See guidance on conducting virtual meetings here.](#)
- Clubs should consider, as an alternative, virtual training options for larger training groups.
- We recommend that clubs use cashless payments only. Where this is not possible clubs should ensure these transactions are as COVID-19 compliant as possible. [Guidance on cashless payment systems can be found here.](#)
- Club officers should continue to remain visible and contactable to members during this time.

Please note, for a club's insurance to be valid, the club needs to be affiliated to England Athletics.

Section 3: Disclaimer

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of England Athletics Limited or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. England Athletics Limited and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

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